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STILL-LIFE PAINTING IN OILS.

II.—WATER-FOWL.

OUR inlets, bays, and rivers, during the fall and early winter months, and the early spring, are generally "alive" with water-fowl. The stately swan, the wild goose, the brandt, and ducks in great variety of form, size and plumage, are to be seen frequently in vast numbers, cleaving the frosty air with their whistling wings, or gracefully floating upon the undulating bosom of the tide. Of course there is great choice to be observed in selecting specimens for pictorial representation. Some species are decidedly unpicturesque, while others are in every sense worthy the painter's best efforts. Take, for instance, the most valued of all the wild duck tribe, the canvas-back, than which in the whole range of dead game there are few more interesting subjects for the still-life painter. We will proceed to suspend a pair for the purpose of transferring them to canvas. I have had made a mortared screen, in imitation of a rough wall, to hang my subjects against. Now we begin by drawing the ducks in carefully, though freely and broadly, with charcoal. Next, we go over the outline with a small-pointed brush charged with burnt Sienna and plenty of oil; we then rub in the wall background in a careless, free manner, as near the actual color as possible, but with no thought of immediate finish. We then lay in the shadows of the birds, using raw umber, burnt Sienna and Vandyck brown, and adding a very little ivory black and white where the tone inclines to gray. The lower part of the neck and upper portion of the breast is intensely black in a male of full plumage; for this use Vandyck brown and a little French ultramarine, and on the shadowed side a small portion of deep madder or Robert lake. Where the light strikes it there will be observed tints of gray; touch these in with pure ivory black and white. The light part of the breast should be painted with white, yellow ochre, raw umber and ivory black; the gray tones of the back and wings with white, black and raw umber. If possible, such subjects should be done at once; not that the whole picture be finished at one sitting, but the portion we are enabled to interpret at one time should be so complete in itself as to render a second solid painting unnecessary. Of course after it is dry, or partially so, there may be many points or portions requiring retouching, which should be the finishing.

The spatula or palette knife is the best tool with which to imitate the wall background. Many artists become so expert in its use as never to require the aid of a brush in painting any flat or plain surface; in fact, the knife will render or translate it better. Be careful to swing your subjects so far from the wall that they may not rest or press against it too closely, otherwise the cast shadow will be too dense and contracted and devoid of transparency. That part of the subject next the cast shadow should be darker than the shadow, otherwise much of the relief is lost. Finally, according with the advice of most good and experienced artists, let me impress upon the amateur the importance of using plenty of color. "Never starve your palette."

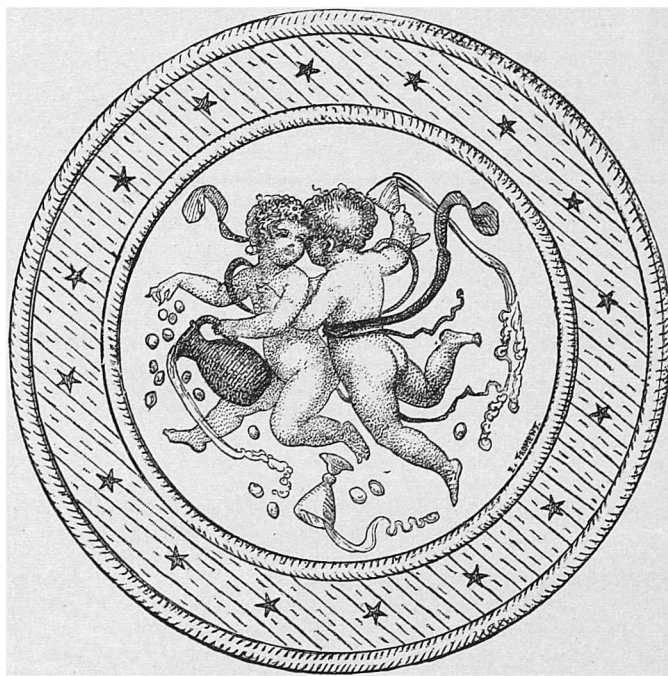
The above directions apply equally to the treatment of the "red-head" and other varieties of water-fowl. I may mention that I use in painting the heads both of the "canvas-back" and "red-head," burnt Sienna and Vandyck brown almost exclusively. The bill of the former bird is black, of the latter a gray-blue. It is important to note well the difference, as also in the shape of both the bill and head, as these constitute the main characteristics of the two birds.

One of the most picturesque of the duck tribe is the "mallard." His brilliant emerald head, gorgeous velvety neck, of a deep brown-lake color, his yellow bill and eyes, and bright, orange-vermilion legs and feet, make him, indeed, a delightful study for the artist. In painting his head I use deep zinober green.

The swan is a very difficult subject to treat successfully, and I advise all young aspirants who cherish an ambition to paint one, to secure a cygnet—one not fully matured, as their plumage is of a pale dove-color, much easier to imitate with the brush, and much more attractive and harmonious in a picture than the cold, stark white of the older bird. Such a subject requires, of course, a large canvas, as, in order to produce an interesting picture, accessories are indispensable, and it behooves us to resort to our invention and knowledge of composition. It would

not be well to make this subject an upright. Let the canvas be about four feet six inches wide, by three feet high. Pose the swan in such a manner that his greatest bulk will show just next to the centre of the canvas. Lay him on his back, not parallel with the table, but at an angle of about forty-five degrees; his breast thrown well out, his long neck describing a serpentine line, with the head laying well up toward the body, one wing (the farther one), stretched half out and upward. Have the edge of the table, or whatever the support may be, about five inches above the base line of the canvas. Now place on the table in front, and partially covering the near wing, but without interfering with the neck or head, a pair of "canvas-backs" or other ducks having a good deal of color. Dispose them so that they may appear easy and unstudied. In the background, not too far back, but just sufficiently so to catch a subdued secondary light, place an old basket, or some such receptacle, filled with apples or other fruit. Have a few lying about here and there in a negligent manner; they serve to fill unsightly gaps, as well as to unite and harmonize the picture by line and color. On the opposite side, hanging against a wall, might be placed some snipe or plover. An old piece of drapery of a subdued mellow tone, the protruding stock of a gun, a cartridge-belt, etc., might add much to the general effect if properly placed.

Wild geese are good subjects and are easily depicted. I should not attempt to paint one on a canvas less than



DECORATIVE DESIGN BY FROMENT.

thirty-two by forty inches, because, as in the case of the swan, it will be found necessary to introduce accessories for proper pictorial effect. This will admit of an upright. Hang the goose by one leg against a wall background (light gray, as already described), his head and neck resting upon an old table, with some smaller game lying about to fill up the canvas. The scheme of color is very simple: white, black, Vandyck brown, burnt Sienna, raw umber and yellow ochre. Of course one may introduce other features into one's picture, if one so desires, that may call for a greater variety of pigments, but when the goose is intended to be the main feature—the object of primary importance—it is hazardous to use bright or glaring color elsewhere, as it is almost certain to distract the attention and thus lower the value of his sober hues.

Perhaps the most difficult, or, at least, the most tedious and troublesome, of water-fowl, to paint successfully, are the bald-pate or whiffler and the wood-duck, on account of their broken color and variety of tint. There are many smaller aquatic birds whose pictorial qualities are thoroughly recognized and highly prized by the painter of still-life; some of these are the plover (several species), the sea robin, or red-breasted snipe, and the curlew. But enough has been said on this branch of the subject, if very imperfectly said, to give to the amateur a few useful hints whereby he may be enabled to pursue his studies with some promise of success. A. J. H. WAY.

To etch upon egg-shell coat the shell with tallow, draw your design, and then immerse the egg in strong acetic acid. This may be found useful at Easter-time.

China Painting.

TALKS ABOUT FIRING.

II.

"ARE you prepared to-day to explain to me the working of the kiln fired by charcoal?"

"Yes. Since I saw you I have attended, or rather assisted, at a charcoal firing. My friend, who owns the kiln, lives on the outskirts of a village, with a large yard behind the house. The kiln was taken out-doors in pieces, as far as possible from the house and out buildings."

"Taken in pieces?"

"Yes. The kiln is made of fire-bricks about ten inches square. Two rows of these, placed one above the other, rest on a strong circular iron frame with legs, a foot from the ground. There is an edge of iron, of course, that holds the bricks in place. There is also a sheet iron band that slides over them at the top for the same purpose. Now you see that as the bricks are all separate they can be carried with the frame and the iron band, as well as the pot itself, anywhere you choose to place them. When the bricks are in position, and the band also, the iron pot that holds the china is lifted inside, the bottom of the pot resting on the iron frame.

There is a space all round the pot of at least four inches between it and the fire-bricks. On one side of the pot, about half way down the side, is—a tube or spout, it looks like; this runs out beyond the fire-brick, and there is one brick perforated to receive it."

"I suppose that is so that one may look at the china during the firing?"

"Yes, it is. The pot is of cast iron, flat on the bottom, with a flat cover. My friend is a very systematic worker, and took all precautions to insure success. To tell the truth, in all kinds of china firing these must be observed to the letter. So, before stacking in the china, we built a small fire of wood on the ground below the pot, to warm it, and thus prevent any steam gathering on the ware from the cold iron. Then we stacked the china, placing the unglazed stilts between each piece. By the way, the cover has also an iron tube running through it to enable one to watch the progress of the firing."

"Did you build another fire on the ground?"

"No. We put the first fire out with water before we stacked the china, to get rid of the smoke and the danger to our clothes. Then with wood and paper we started a fire between the pot and fire-bricks, all around, heaping small bits of charcoal gradually, and fanning the flames with a palm-leaf fan, near the ground, to insure a better draught. Fortunately there was a strong breeze, which carried away from us the volumes of smoke."

"I wonder the neighbors were not alarmed?"

"They had every reason to be, I am sure. But my friend has great discretion, and they probably know it. She told me, during her first firing, a thunder-storm came up unexpectedly before the kiln was quite cold, and, in order to protect it, they piled some bricks and then heavy planks on the top; it was not five minutes before the planks were smoking, so great was the heat."

"I interrupted you?"

"Yes. I was speaking of the fire of charcoal built up to the top of the pot. While one person was tending this, two others started fires in two sheet iron pails, with large round holes on the sides and bottom, with long wire handles to swing them back and forth to catch all the draught."

"It seems as though fires burn fast enough without all that trouble!"

"Well, you would have been interested to have seen our group. Had it been night you might have imagined yourself in the infernal regions. However, the fires were well started at last and the hot coals from the pails emptied on the top of the kiln. Then the remainder of the barrel of charcoal was heaped on the glowing coals."

"Barrel of charcoal! Do you mean to say it took a barrel-full?"

"Yes, and we broke it up with a hatchet in small pieces so it would ignite more readily. And then we fanned and fanned, but that was to hurry the firing, because we dared not leave it."

"What do you mean by you 'dared not leave it'? How could you tell when it was done?"

"We were watching the china through those tubes or spouts I told you of, every few minutes. We saw the inside of the kiln gradually becoming a rose color, and finally my friend detected the white mist which followed. I told you, did I not, that we watched the same appearance in the gas-kiln? When the firing was done she took the long-handled hook, pushed aside the grate at the bottom—which I had not noticed was movable—and the hot coals fell to the ground and were raked out and away from the kiln. The top of the kiln was also raked off, and when the coals were far enough away they were deluged with water to avoid danger."

"A barrel of charcoal must have made a glowing bed of coals!"

"Yes, indeed. I was told of a decorator who was presented with one of these kilns, and was told he could use it in his house. He put it up in his kitchen as he had no cellar. When the fire was fairly started, to his horror the adjoining woodwork and floor began to smoke, and he actually had to break the whole thing apart with an axe, and with water and coal-scuttles he managed to get it out in the air by pieces."

"How long did the firing take?"

"We were busy about three hours and a half, and it took about as long to cool off so that we could take out the china."

"The glaze was good, and no piece injured?"

"Yes, the glaze was perfect, and the colors came out just as they should do. Two pieces were fired too much, but that was more an error of judgment in the placing them than the fault of the kiln. Such errors occur in every firing, and can only be remedied by long practice."

"I can see without your mentioning them, the difficulties of firing in this way. Are there no other ways of firing with charcoal?"

"Yes, there is a kiln manufactured by Lacroix, the Frenchman whose tube colors are so largely used in this country."

"What do you think of it?"

"It does the work well. The kiln is square, with an iron frame enclosing fire-bricks. The pot or muffle is placed inside, and the fire built between, as in the one I have described. It is claimed that the fuel will have burned up in an hour, and that then it can be left to cool; but I cannot see how this is possible, for five minutes more of heat than is necessary is sure to spoil the china colors, and you know very well that the same degree of heat would be maintained while the live coals were present. Then, too, this kiln has a smoke-stack, and should be connected with a chimney to secure a good draught."

L. S. K.

THE FISH PLATE.

IN painting this design (Plate No. 564), use grass green in very thin washes for the whole except the curly sea-weed at the base. Shade with the same color and brown green. The beauty of this form lies in making it feathery and delicate. The curly weed is to be in carmine No. 1, shaded with brown 108 or 17 toward the base. In the foreground use grass and brown green for the grass-like weeds, with touches of brown. For the stones use a gray made of brown 108 and Victoria blue. Fish, a thin wash of yellow ochre over the whole. Back, brown green at the top, shading into grass green below; leave the ventral surface yellow. Stripes of brown 108, shaded at the top, with a little black, which should be used sparingly, and in this case mixed with the brown. The tail and fins (except the one on the middle of the body) should be a thin wash of brown green, with brown markings. Middle fin, yellow ochre, brown markings; black spot at its base. Mouth and eye, yellow ochre. Centre of eye and ring around it, black. Take out high light in centre. Scales should be very faintly represented with brown green and grow indistinct toward head and lower surface. Water lines, grass green. Tint the border of the plate with the same color. If the whole plate is tinted (which makes a pretty effect) scratch out the water lines.

THE PANEL OF CARDINAL FLOWERS.

IN painting this design by "Kappa" (Plate 655), for the petals of the flower, which are brilliantly red, use orange red, shading with capucin red and black. The dark spot at base of petal is almost black. For the slender neck of the flower use a light wash of red brown deepening toward the base. Use the same for the under side of the petals. The extreme tip of the flower is red, the bit just below whitish. The leaves and stalks are medium green, the stalks rather the lightest. Use apple, brown, and emerald greens, shading with brown green. Use a background of light yellow clouding with gold. Outline the flowers with very dark red or black and the leaves with brown green. Or a gold outline may be used with good effect. For the body of the dragon-fly use a light wash of yellow brown shaded with black. The wings should be left transparent, just outlined and lightly shaded with fine lines as in drawing. Along the upper portion of each wing, however, a light wash of yellow brown may be used.

THE ROSE PLATE.

IN treating Plate 654, design of roses, by I. B. S. N.—the first of a series of six—a background of very pale green can be made an effective one for the pale yellow of the tea-roses. One moss green if put on delicately will be soft and good. If a more decided green is preferred take grass green, with a little mixing yellow. Erase all color from the china for the design. For the yellow tinge of this variety of roses use mixing yellow for the palest hue, and where a greenish shade occurs use the least touch of brown green with this yellow. Sometimes a reddish tint pervades the coloring, and if this is desired use the least touch of rouge chair No. 1, with the yellow in the parts where the strongest coloring occurs. Shade with brown green delicately. Mix a little deep blue with grass green, and use this in a medium wash for the calyxes; for the stems use brown green, adding a little violet of iron for the older branches and the thorns. Use brown green for the leaves, adding a little blue where cool tones are desired, and a little deep purple to green where gray shadows are seen. Violet of iron gives all the reddish coloring on the leaves. Outline all the work with brown green. An edging of dull gold will be a suitable finish for the plate.

Amateur Photographer.

CONDUCTED BY GEORGE G. ROCKWOOD.

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTS IN PHOTOGRAPHY.—The rapid development of the resources of the new artificial lights for photographic uses promises to make pictures by night the rule and daylight work the exception. Dr. Piffard's new pyrotechnic compound is one of the most novel applications in this way; yet its uses, while in a measure reliable for emergencies and for an amusement, for thoroughly artistic purposes will, in a degree, be limited. Where, then, shall we seek, outside of the expensive plants necessitated for the use of electricity, the desired light? I think we can hopefully look for it in illuminating gas as now used in the largest quantities, and through the well-known inventions of Sugg and others. Excellent illumination is secured, but the light is so yellow as to give but feeble actinic or photographic results. The incandescent system seems likely to solve the problem. This consists in producing a white heat in certain metals and carbons by the mixture of gas with common air, somewhat on the principle of the Oxycalcium light. I have seen a number of devices of this nature in Paris and London, which, when perfected, seem certain to accomplish the desired effect. At the "Trois-quartiers," on the Boulevard des Capucines, the large show-windows were lighted on summer evenings with incandescent light produced by ordinary gas and air, which gave a beautiful white light, and defined tints of color admirably. This method of illumination, applied on a larger scale, would probably do very well for photographic purposes. The light was produced by a carbon filament or grate, which was brought to a white heat by the combustion of ordinary illuminating gas under the gauze or cone. The complete combustion was produced in two ways: one method effected the result by supplying the gas under pressure, and another by suction or partial vacuum, secured by the use of a chimney, three or four feet long, to the cone or flame. Two or three years ago I made some experiments in this city in this direction. I placed upon an ordinary Bunsen burner a cone of platinum wire, and enclosed the flame in a glass chimney, which was supplemented by a long iron tube, which made a tight joint with the chimney, and was carried up some three or four feet. The light was excellent, being white and of an intense actinic quality. But it was not permanent. The platinum would in a few hours burn out, and could only be replaced at considerable expense. The attempt has been made since to secure a cone or mantle to the burner which would give perfect incandescence at a small expense and a more permanent light. The result is already a commercial success. The inventor is Dr. Auer von Welsbach, under whose system the gas is burned completely, without smoke, and the heat thus produced is taken up by an incandescent body, and converted into brilliant light. The mantle consists of a small, fine gauze cone. When heated to incandescence over a small Bunsen gas burner, it emits a brilliant light, due to the metallic oxides which are employed in the preparation of the mantle. Being incombustible, it remains intact, and does not change in any manner until after several hundred hours' use. A comparatively low temperature being required to raise the material to a state of incandescence, no special apparatus for producing great heat is required. The burner is perfectly silent, being free from any hissing noise.

THE "FLASH LIGHT."—Very few new things have been so quickly adopted and come into use as the "flash light" of Dr. Piffard. I have myself made several group pictures at private houses with interesting results. In one case, a Thanksgiving dinner-party of thirteen, consisting of adults and children, was successfully photographed, the group making a souvenir of unusual value. These experiences have been quite instructive, as I have, in common with others, discovered some hindrances and obstacles. I find that, owing to the very large flames made by the magnesium, there is much danger of light shining into the instrument and fogging the plate. Since my first experiments I have used the greatest care in this regard, and, where possible, placed a screen so that the camera was completely protected. One of my operators, Mr. Daniel Murphy, who was cramped for space, and who apprehended the possibility of the light interfering with his lens, purchased a cheap circular dish-pan, and, having bent in the side so that it would stand on end, bolted it to the top of a head-rest, and he thus not only protected the lens from the light by the sides of the pan, but secured an admirable reflector, which directed and much strengthened the light. In a series of portrait

illustrations which I supplied recently to The Philadelphia Photographer, there was one curious effect, which has excited considerable comment. The hands of the subject, a little child, were represented as dark as those of a negro, while the nails were brilliantly white. The local color, of course, produced the peculiarity, but I have not yet been able to fathom the mystery or determine by experiments the relative value of the magnesium light in the translation of color. I shall look into the matter, however.

I understand that Dr. Piffard has been making some interesting experiments in orthochromatic photography with the instantaneous flash, and that he found the magnesium was too white a light. He has made a "golden orthochromatic compound," with which he has obtained remarkable results. A print was shown at the Philadelphia Amateur Photographic Club from a negative made in this way. The subject was a bunch of Chrysanthemums, yellow, magenta, etc., and the color values were reproduced in the most perfect manner.

To return once more to the subject of the portraits I have made by the magnesium light, a correspondent asks if he "should use a head screen or any medium to diffuse or soften the light?" The results, of course, are much better when a screen is used. I employed a frame, covered with two thicknesses of a thin book muslin, which gave a roundness and detail to the modelling which approached the effects ordinarily obtained in diffused daylight, but at a loss of light which has been estimated at about one quarter. Notwithstanding this loss there seems to be sufficient action to the sensitive plate. I have had reason to change the formula for magnesium powder and gun-cotton for large groups in parlors and other large rooms. I now use about eight or ten grains of cotton, instead of five, as formerly, and fifteen grains of magnesium powder, instead of ten, as first designated. A slight excess of light is not a serious fault, and can be easily modified in the development.

HYDROQUINONE.—Mr. Carbutt, the well-known photographer of Philadelphia, has been making a series of experiments in the use of the above developer for transparencies or lantern slides. He used of the alkali 2 drachms, of the hydroquinone 4 drachms, and of water 2 ounces. With a developer made in this way he developed 13 slides, and bottled the solution for future use. There was no sign of stain, and no clearing needed.

NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY AT HOME.—In an article on the Piffard flash light, The Tribune says: "The perfect control of this light is, after its adaptability to night-work at home, its great advantage. The operator always knows exactly how strong his light has been, and consequently knows precisely how to treat his plate in developing the image. Daylight is very uncertain and very deceptive; the time of day, the season of the year, and many other details having to be considered quite irrespective of the apparent illuminating power of the daylight, which is a decidedly different thing from the actinic power that gives it photographic value. With the magnesium light it is always:—'so many grains of magnesium, so much light.' If the lens is 'stopped down,' the amateur can calculate to a grain how much more powder he must burn to get the same result. For taking parlor groups such a light is invaluable. A side light from a window is always hard to manage, and few amateurs are in position to cut holes in their mothers', their landladies', or even their wives' ceilings in order to get a 'stud light.' The magnesium light can be turned on or 'blown off' from any desired quarter. Obtrusive and unwelcome daylight from windows unfortunately placed need no longer drive the amateur wild in his endeavors to avoid it. 'Sitters,' rarely available in the day-time, can be had in plenty at night, and that, too, dressed in their best apparel. The family life centres about the fireplace at night, and the characteristic home groupings are thus placed within the amateur's reach at once. The instantaneous nature of the new light avoids all tiresome 'posing'; the domestic operator bothers no one until he is ready to 'shoot,' when he downs the lights and blazes away. The card-table, the familiar corners with easy-chairs and people in them, the baby kissing back 'good night' from the half-opened door—a thousand and one groups and characteristic combinations are thus added to the amateur's models. No lady who has an amateur in the family need forego the delight of having her costumes photographed or need don them on purpose; for the brief moment she tarries while waiting for her carriage will suffice for the young artist, who may develop his plate while she is at the ball, and with the aid of the morning sunlight can make a print before she is up, and show her at her breakfast table 'exactly how she looked.'"

MRS. LANGTRY'S DOCTORED PHOTOGRAPHS.—At a meeting of the Glasgow Society of Amateur Photographers, one of the speakers remarked: "Whether it is legitimate to materially alter form as well as shade I do not dare to express more than a very humble opinion. I observed not very long ago a photograph of Mrs. Langtry, in which, with the aid of the pencil, some inches—I was about to say three or four, but I hesitate to say so much—were neatly cut off her waist, and an inch and a half—I am perfectly certain about that figure—was sliced off what had been in the original photograph her shoulders. Is this legitimate? Well, I am inclined to think, yes, so long as it is done so well as to baffle detection. I do not, in this instance, mean to affirm that the camera lied as to Mrs. Langtry's actual form or contour, which apparently, in the view of the artist, required some slight modification. On the contrary, I believe what was tried to be hidden was very nearly, if not quite the truth, and what was wanted to be shown was very decidedly not the truth, and yet with this plainly before me I confess I was quite pleased that the artist had done something to assist nature. In the pencil the portrait photographer possesses an instrument of Mephistophelian power. The old are made young, and the plump are sliced down. Things, by the force of circumstances, are no longer kept as they are. Complete power is given to make them, from the artistic point of view, as they ought to be. And it cannot be gainsaid that things should be made, even in a forcible manner, as they ought to be."